

Map Update Process

Pre-Scoping

ODNR will send letters and informational packets to those communities that will be funded for Flood Map Modernization in a current fiscal year. This letter kicks off the modernization process with what are known as *Pre-scoping Activities*. The purpose of these activities is to research and accumulate resources that will contribute to the map update project. Such activities include digital base map inventories, mapping needs assessments, and Letters of Map Change collection.

The digital base map inventories involve obtaining the best available base map materials, such as corporate limits, roads, aerial photography, stream centerlines, and topographic data. Mapping needs assessments include the collection of needs from FEMA's Mapping Needs Update Support System (MNUSS). This system was developed to track and prioritize mapping needs identified by communities. ODNR will perform an in-house mapping needs assessment by compiling needs from community files (Community Assistance Visit Reports, correspondence, effective flood map panels) and an approximate (unnumbered) A-Zone analysis. This analysis involves measuring densities of structures within or near an approximate A-Zone.

The Study Contractor and ODNR will also use this time to compile all approved Letters of Map Change (LOMCs), including Letters of Map Amendment, Letters of Map Revision Based on Fill, and Letters of Map Revision. These LOMCs will be addressed during *Map Production*, but an accurate list is necessary so all are addressed in the project.

Scoping Meeting

The next stage of this process is called the *Scoping Meeting*. This meeting presents an opportunity for all interested parties to gather, finalize the scope of project and confirm project task assignments. The scope of project formally identifies where new flood studies will be conducted, their type, and their limits. Invited to this meeting are representatives from FEMA, ODNR, the Regional Management Center (RMC), the Study Contractor (if used), and communities throughout the county being updated.

Mapping needs play an integral role in the *Scoping Meeting* as well. Because funding is limited for this map update, new flood studies will be few. However, the meeting provides an excellent opportunity for federal, state, and private entities to collect local mapping needs. Such needs will be documented and provided as impetus for future flood study funding.

Map Production

Following the conclusion of the *Scoping Meeting*, entities involved in the map update begin their partnership roles in *Map Production*. This step of the update process involves the completion of all tasks identified and assigned during the *Scoping Meeting*. For instance, the paper flood maps will be digitally scanned and geo-registered during this phase. This is also the time when the newly created digital flood layers will be fine tuned to fit the best available topographic data. If any flood studies are performed, this would be the phase for their completion and incorporation into the new maps.

Letters of Map Change (LOMCs) will also be addressed during this phase. Each FEMA-approved map change will be handled in one of four ways: 1) incorporation into the new maps; 2) revalidation; 3) superseded; or 4) case-by-case review. Letters of Map Revision (LOMRs) (not those based on fill, or LOMR-Fs) will be incorporated into the new flood maps. Large-scale LOMR-Fs and Letters of Map Amendment (LOMAs) may be incorporated into the new maps depending on their size. However, most LOMAs and LOMR-Fs will be revalidated since they are



too small in scale to be represented on the maps. If a new study has been performed on a watercourse near any LOMCs, the LOMCs may be superseded or may need case-by-case review.

Digital maps created during this phase will be reviewed by FEMA so as to ensure that they meet the *Guidelines and Specifications for Flood Hazard Mapping Partners*. For further information about these guidelines, click here (http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/dl_cgs.shtm).

Preliminary Maps

Preliminary Maps and a preliminary Flood Insurance Study (FIS) are released for public review when all tasks have been completed, and the new digital flood maps have been printed. Each community will receive copies of the preliminary flood maps, a preliminary Flood Insurance Study report, and a preliminary Summary of Map Actions (SOMA). This last document summarizes what happened to all of the Letters of Map Change affected by the map update. For further information, please see the description of *Map Production*.

Once the *Preliminary Maps* are released, community officials are encouraged to review the maps for accuracy and completeness. In order to aid in this effort, ODNR has developed the "Preliminary Map Review Checklist" specifically for local officials. This list will guide them during their review, and it will provide them a way to document evidence for any issues they may have with the new maps.

Flood Risk Information Open House

Once the *Preliminary Maps* are released and communities have an opportunity to review them, FEMA will coordinate a Flood Risk Information Open House. The Open House involves two meetings: local official meeting and public meeting. Federal and state officials and the Study Contractor will meet with community officials to discuss the new maps, any issues associated with them, and their implications. Once this meeting has concluded, FEMA, ODNR and community officials will have an opportunity to answer public inquiries regarding the preliminary maps. Questions generally range in topic from flood insurance and building requirements to mitigation opportunities and map changes.

Appeals Period/Comment Period

After the *Flood Risk Information Open House*, FEMA will publish the preliminary base flood elevations (BFEs) in the *Federal Register* (only if BFEs have changed), and they will notify the CEO of each community regarding this publishing. Additionally, FEMA will post this information in local newspapers twice in a two-week period. On the date of the second publication, the *90-day Appeals Period* begins, and this is when stakeholders may submit new flood data (appeals) or map corrections (protests) to their community floodplain officials for possible incorporation into the new digital FIRMs. At the end of *Appeals Period*, FEMA will resolve all appeals and protests to finalize the maps and the Flood Insurance Study report.

If BFEs have not changed due to the map update, a *90-Day Appeals Period* will not be held. Rather, *30-Day Comment Period* will be held in its place, and this will still provide citizens and community officials an opportunity to submit protests.

Letter of Final Determination

When the maps are finalized, FEMA will issue the communities a *Letter of Final Determination* (LFD), and this initiates the mandatory update of their floodplain regulations. A community has six months from the LFD to update their flood damage reduction regulations. This timeframe includes the ODNR review and approval time; so, they actually have less than six months for this



update. If a community's floodplain regulations are not approved by ODNR and adopted by the effective date of the maps, the community will be suspended from the NFIP. Potential consequences associated with suspension include flood insurance unavailability and some disaster assistance unavailability.

Flood Maps Effective

Communities have six months from the date of the Letter of Final Determination to update their flood damage reduction regulations to reflect the new maps. After this period, the new maps are *effective*, and are the tools the communities must use to implement their floodplain regulations. Most flood insurance policies written on or after the effective date will be based on the flood hazard data on the new maps.

In terms of logistics, the map update process takes approximately 2-3 years from the initial *Pre-Scoping Activities* until the maps become *effective*. This period of time depends, in part, on the types of studies conducted in a given county and the amount of floodplain located within its boundaries.

